

# HANGARTALK

*Newsletter of Chapter 84 of the Experimental Aircraft Association at Harvey Field in Snohomish, WA*

*April, 2007*

## **President's Corner**

### **EAA's Case Against User Fees**

EAA is continuing to work with other general aviation organizations to oppose the FAA's proposal for funding the nation's air traffic control system. The funding plan, which reflects the advocacy of the powerful big-airlines lobby, would implement user fees and sharply increase fuel taxes to replace the current, time-tested system of excise taxes on aviation fuel and airline passengers. EAA and the other general aviation groups view this as nothing but a ploy by the airlines to offload more of their costs onto general aviation while grabbing more control of the nation's airspace. Meanwhile, their proposals would require the establishment of a new and potentially costly bureaucracy.

In the past 10 years, the airline industry received a \$5 billion government bailout, a \$10 billion loan guarantee program, and a shift of some pension obligations to the U.S. taxpayer. Now, as many airlines are experiencing a recovery, they want to jettison even more costs by imposing user fees on general aviation. The airlines, represented by the Air Transport Association (ATA), falsely claim they pay more than 90 percent of all aviation taxes but make up only two-thirds of the operational activity in the system. Yet in the 35 airline hubs that receive the vast majority of FAA funds and resources, general-aviation operations account for only 6% of the total. For example, when general aviation was prohibited from operating at Washington D.C.'s Reagan National Airport in the wake of 9/11, overall ATC costs there were not affected.

However, the cost of the user fee proposals to participants in general aviation, including the many EAA members who enjoy personal flight as a pastime, would be sizable. The FAA's proposal includes new fees to pay for the costs of numerous certification and registration activities, such as: registering an aircraft (\$130), replacing an aircraft registration (\$45), issuing an original dealer's aircraft certificate (\$130), issuing an additional aircraft certificate (\$105), issuing/renewing a special registration number (\$80/\$50), recording a security interest (\$130), recording a security interest in aircraft parts (\$130), issuing or replacing an airman certificate (\$50/\$25), issuing an airman medical certificate (\$42), and providing legal title opinions pertaining to aircraft transactions (\$100). And, of course, there's the potentially devastating 3.5-fold fuel tax increase, from 19.4¢ to 70¢ per gallon, and a series of other user fees for access to the nation's busiest airports.

The FAA maintains that its plan is essential for funding the creation of the next generation air traffic control system. Adding insult to injury, the concepts and proposals for accomplishing this modernization entail greater restrictions and costs for general-aviation operations. Meanwhile, projected revenue from a user fee system in 2008 would be approximately \$600 million less than the funds that would be raised by maintaining the current excise tax structure. The shortfall would persist, amounting to approximately \$900 million less funding from 2009 to 2012.

In Canada 10 years ago, when the ATC system was established as a government corporation (NavCanada), light general aviation was exempted from ATC and airport user fees. Now, despite an appeal to the Canadian Transportation Agency, general aviation light aircraft operators will pay charges for the use of seven important airports (including several reliever facilities) for the first time. According to the Canadian Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the airline community is viewing this as just the beginning of general aviation paying user fees in Canada. Even more extreme examples of user fees harming or practically killing general aviation in numerous other countries add to the condemning evidence. Common sense indicates that any initial user fee scheme will eventually trickle down and be imposed on all flight-related operations.

The FAA's proposal would also transfer control of agency funding and oversight away from Congress and dramatically reduce public control of how the FAA exercises its discretionary spending. EAA remains categorically opposed to user fees. Such a system will not enhance safety and it will not improve services. It will add barriers for thousands of recreational aviators while being a costly burden to the federal government."

How, then, do the big airlines and the FAA attempt to justify such an imbalanced, unfair, and flawed proposal? Their rhetoric asserts that "fat cats" in private jets should pay more for using the nation's ATC and other services. But it conveniently overlooks the oppressive effects their proposals ultimately would have on average aviation enthusiasts like the members of a thousand EAA chapters across the nation. Those chapters are made up of people who already make sacrifices to afford their enjoyment of personal flight. They should not have to underwrite big businesses' use of, and attempts to commandeer, the nation's airspace.

## EAA's Case Against User Fees (continued)

If you agree with EAA's stand on this issue, please take a moment to write your Congressional Representatives and Senators to let them know your position. Washington Senators' and area Representatives' addresses are provided here, along with a sample format letter you can customize and personalize for your use.

Honorable Maria Cantwell  
U.S. Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
173 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Jay Inslee (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
403 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-4701

Honorable Rick Larson (2<sup>nd</sup> District)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
107 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

For any other Representatives, see <http://www.house.gov>

### Sample Letter:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to request that you strongly reject the terms calling for **user fees** contained in the Administration's proposed FAA reauthorization legislation entitled, "Next Generation Transportation System Financing Reform Act of 2007." [Say what you think the result of the proposed user fees would mean to you — e.g., would cause you to sell your aircraft, would reduce the amount of flying you do, would prevent you from obtaining a private pilot certificate, etc. Try to keep the statement to one or two sentences.]

[State who you are and give some information on your aviation frame of reference. For example, "I am a private pilot and owner of a small homebuilt aircraft, which I fly for recreation." Another example could be, "I am a USAF-trained pilot with over 50 years' experience in the flying game and, although I very seldom write letters to elected officials, this problem has caught my attention."]

The present funding system for the world's biggest, best, and safest Air Traffic Control System is NOT broken. The OMB agrees with this assessment as well. The Aviation Trust Fund revenues are at a record level and are projected to increase at a rate of approximately 6% annually for the next five years. The President's own FY 2008 budget estimates indicate there are adequate tax revenues to fully fund the Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF), if extended. Conversely, the user fee proposal would raise nearly \$1 billion LESS between 2008 and 2012 than would be raised under the current system.

[Pick one or two of the following points to use in your letter.

- User fees are a bad way to fund a new system**, as projected collection costs would eat up much of the potential revenue.
- FAA failed its accounting audit** this year, indicating the agency still cannot identify an appropriate cost structure for services.
- The current system of excise taxes and the method of collection are extremely efficient. **A user fee system would be complex, bureaucratic, and expensive.**
- Congress plays a critical role** in providing budget and management oversight of the FAA and must not be cut out of this oversight role.
- The U.S. air transportation system is a national asset** that benefits every citizen of this country. Accordingly, every taxpayer should help pay for it through a healthy general fund contribution to the FAA operations budget.
- As a national asset, **the U.S. air transportation system does not belong to any one set of users:** military, airline, or general aviation. It is a shared asset and no one constituency should attempt to usurp control.
- There are no financial constraints on the FAA's ability to modernize** the air traffic and national airspace systems. The agency need only develop a plan that is sound, accommodates the needs of all users, and contains appropriate cost accounting and controls, and then present it to the aviation community and Congress.
- User fees have proven time and again to be expensive, inefficient, and damaging to general aviation** in every country in which they have been introduced. Canada, Germany, Australia, the U.K., the Netherlands, the Philippines, Austria, Israel, and many other nations have implemented user fees in one form or another — all with disastrous results for their general aviation communities.]

[Closing paragraph: Thank your Senator for giving attention to this matter. Ask the Senator to remember and share your concerns in the debate on this issue.]

Sincerely,

Your name  
Address  
E-mail

Ed. Note: Regular US Mail carries more weight with politicians than e-mail.

## **EAA Chapter 84 Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 13, 2007**

Submitted by Harold Shoemaker, Chapter Secretary

President Rand Martin called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. 43 members present.

**Visitors:** There were three guests present;

Jim Burke, who has sent for plans to build a Sonex.

Mike Adams, who has a Rans 14 with a 503 for power.

Richard Morrison, who is in the process of building his hanger, and has plans to build a plane of his own design. Richard was a guest of Dan Thomas.

**Presidents Report:** Rand stated that Chapter 84 Staff had been contacted by a person who may want to donate a Zenith 701 and a 701 kit to the Chapter. Rand explained the legal constraints on the Chapter accepting this type of a donation. While most of the Chapter members seemed to favor following through on this quest, Rand explained that it was just talk at this time, and may or may not happen.

Rand told the members that there may have been some confusion about the tickets handed out for the Christmas Dinner drawing, and the tickets for the nightly meeting drawing. As of tonight the tickets for the meeting drawing, would be red, and the other tickets would remain blue.

Rand turned to Tom Mahon who talked about the trouble he was having with some email addresses when he tried to send out this month's newsletter. There have been 21 members who have signed up for email delivery of the newsletter, the rest are still getting theirs by snail mail.

**Treasurer Report:** Nick Gentry reported that we have \$464.73 in petty cash, \$928.38 in savings. He stated that the check for Harley Beard's plaque was still outstanding, so that would reduce the savings by \$350.00.

**Secretary Report:** The minutes of the January meeting were published in the newsletter, and by a hand vote, the members voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

**New Business:** Rand Martin stated that the chapter treasurer was still holding the First Flight Award for Mike Sigman. Mike was present tonight, so he was brought forward to accept the plaque from Rand. Mike built a Zenair 601, and is currently flying out of the Arlington Airport.

Rand spoke about making the May meeting a potluck dinner. Art Tuck brought up the fact that the Chapter used to have an auction around that time of the year. There was some discussion and the members voted to combine the two ideas into the same meeting. There will be more on this in the following months.

Rand said that Jim Morgan had suggested at the last staff meeting that the members might wish to visit the Paine Field tower. This could be on a Saturday when there wasn't a project visit planned. Most members were in favor of the idea. Jim Morgan will check into this possibility and find out what the requirements are.

**Old Business:** The rest stop coffee stand idea hasn't moved forward at this time, but Harold Shoemaker and Tom Mahon are still pursuing the idea as a way for the Chapter to make some money.

**Project Visit:** The project visit will be Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at Dave Weber's place (15107 68<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. Snohomish, WA. 425-357-1595)

**Safety Report:** Rex Smith was out of town, and had sent his Safety Report to the newsletter editor to be included in the March Newsletter.

**Meeting Program:** The program tonight was the video presentation by Allen Kam of the National Weather Service in Seattle. He discussed the Puget Sound Convergence Zone and the factors that go into making up our special weather in the area.

**50/50 Drawing:** The winner of tonight's drawing was Maynard Crosby.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS FOR YOUR CHAPTER MEETINGS:

April 10<sup>th</sup> – WSP and their “Speeder Catching” aircraft. A presentation on the Washington State Patrol’s aviation activities, including a look at one of their airplanes and its equipment.

May 8<sup>th</sup> - Potluck Dinner and Auction --- Bring a favored dish, some guests, and some airplane parts to be auctioned off.

June 12<sup>th</sup> – Chapter 84 Fly-in & Barbecue. More info to follow.

## REMINDERS

**2007 DUES NEED TO BE PAID AND YOUR CHAPTER ID CARD NEEDS TO BE SIGNED.**

*(See Nick Gentry at the meeting)*

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## RECENT PROJECT VISITS

Here are some photos of the last 2 Project Visits.

In February, we visited Tom Williams and his Starduster Project. Tom is being very meticulous in crafting his wings and has done a superb job so far. He will be at Arlington again this year showing everybody how to build a wood/metal/fabric airplane.

*(Pictures courtesy of Jim Davison)*



Tom also has a neat welding setup to build his metal fuselage. He may have the wings AND fuselage at Arlington!

## RECENT PROJECT VISITS *(continued)*

In March, we went to see Dave Weber's Sonex Project. Dave is building the all metal Sonex from plans and is doing an excellent job with his metal work. At this visit, Dave had the able assistance of his beautiful daughter, Melissa, with the refreshments she and her Mom made for the visitors. Melissa's friend, Pravina, gave her a hand.

*(Pictures courtesy of Jim Davison)*



Note that former Chapter member, Frank Melder, the current Newsletter editor for Chapter 818 in Burlington, showed up at this visit. There were between 10 and 15 folks at this event throughout the morning!

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### REMINDER –

We still have about 10 hats and some Medium and Large T-Shirts for sale. See Nick Gentry at the meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>.



c/o Nick Gentry  
 12124 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE  
 Everett, WA 98208



*Our thanks to the Folks at*  *for the use of the Hangar*

*\*\*\* See you at the Meeting on Tuesday, April 10th\*\*\**

**Chapter 84 Contact Information**

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<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Harold Shoemaker</b>	<b>360-659-6808</b>	<b>chum.shoemaker@verizon.net</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Nick Gentry</b>	<b>425-355-9143</b>	<b>richardbgentry@comcast.net</b>
<b>Librarian</b>	<b>Dan Thomas</b>	<b>425-337-5908</b>	<b>dancolleenthomas@juno.com</b>
<b>Technical Counselor</b>	<b>Jim Davison</b>	<b>425-334-1215</b>	<b>jbdavison@aol.com</b>
<b>Technical Counselor</b>	<b>Mike Henderson</b>	<b>425-672-4257</b>	<b>flyingmikeh@comcast.net</b>
<b>Safety Counselor</b>	<b>Rex Smith</b>	<b>425-483-8272</b>	<b>rexjeanine5@comcast.net</b>
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